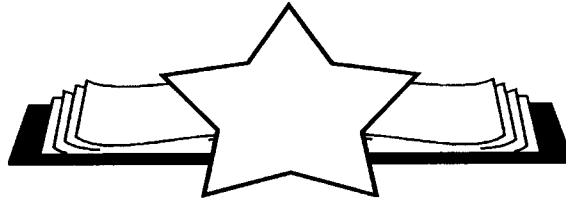


## NEW JERSEY

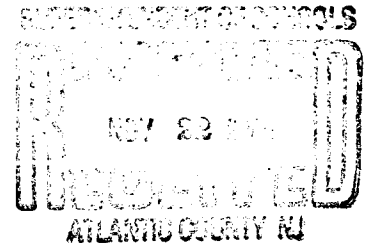
2000-2001

## Guidelines and Application

STAR



SCHOOLS

**Deadline for Application to County Office:  
NOVEMBER 27, 2000**

The Star School application is a public document. The information that you provide will serve as the official record. Review the application prior to submission to ensure accuracy and adherence to the guidelines. Type or keyboard information requested on this page

County	Atlantic		
District (Proper Name)	Galloway Township School District		
Address	101 S. Reeds Road		
	Street/P. O. Box Absecon, New Jersey 08201		
	City	Zip Code	
Telephone	Fax 609-748-6564	Email <a href="http://www.gtps.k12.nj.us/">www.gtps.k12.nj.us/</a>	
Chief School Administrator	Mr. Douglas Groff		
Nominated School (Proper Name)	Reeds Road Elementary School		
Address	103 S. Reeds Road		
	Street/P. O. Box Absecon, New Jersey 08201		
	City	Zip Code	
Telephone	Fax 609-748-6564	Email <a href="mailto:hosszip@hotmail.com">hosszip@hotmail.com</a>	
Principal	Dr. William J. Ziapparo		
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	<i>Douglas Groff</i>		

FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY

Approved: ☒ Yes ☐ No County Superintendent's Signature*Wm T. Key*

**NEW JERSEY  
STAR SCHOOLS  
2000-2001 APPLICATION**

**RESPONSES to the information below and the statements must be ANONYMOUS.** No reference should be made to the names of the district, the school or the community. Use the words "the school" in referring to the applicant in the responses to the statements.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
<b>Type of School</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elementary School <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School <input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School <input type="checkbox"/> High School <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<b>Grade Levels</b> <u>1-6</u> _____ _____ _____	<b>School Enrollment</b> <u>575</u>  <b>Name of the School's Specialization or Whole-School Reform Model</b> <u>Character Education</u> _____
<b>Location:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Urban/city; <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban with urban characteristics; <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban; <input type="checkbox"/> Small City/Town; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural		
<b>Previous Star School:</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, Year(s) _____		

**KEYBOARDED RESPONSES** to the statements below must be **no more than a total of five pages**. Keyboard the statement followed by the response.

1. Describe the school's specialization or whole-school reform model and its objectives, the student educational needs and the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards,\** that it addresses. Detail how it promotes high student achievement and contributes to school-wide accomplishments.
  
2. Describe the professional development activities and research of the school's faculty. Detail to what extent these activities contribute to exemplary teaching practices in their classrooms. Explain the link between these activities and the specialization or whole-school reform model.
  
3. Describe the leadership style of the school's administration and how the management and educational program demonstrate administrative and fiscal efficiency. Describe any innovative scheduling and/or management strategies implemented.
  
4. Describe the school's overall approach to assessment. How are your methods aligned to the specialization or whole-school reform model? How are you ensuring that the content you are measuring is consistent with the *Core Curriculum Content Standards*? Provide student performance data for the school years 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 using state tests and, if you wish, national and/or district standardized norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced tests, and/or alternative assessments. Explain any dramatic increase or decrease. Specify which groups, if any, are excluded from the assessments for which you provide data. Give the percentage of students excluded. You may use a chart.
  
5. Describe collaborative efforts with families, business, the community, school districts, and/or higher education that contribute to a school environment governed by the students' needs and promoting high student achievement.
  
6. **Previous Star School Winners Only:** Provide a one-page addendum to your application that describes efforts to expand or replicate the specialization or whole-school reform model within the school and/or the district. Have there been dissemination activities beyond the school or district? If so, please elaborate.

\*The May 1996 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.  
6appss.20

**1. Describe the school's specialization or whole-school reform model and its objectives, the student educational needs and the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*, that it addresses. Detail how it promotes high student achievement and contributes to school-wide accomplishments.**

The school's specialization, Character Education, is infused throughout all aspects of the school environment, including its staff, students, curriculum programs, parents, and community members and organizations. To be effective, Character Education, by virtue of its nature, is not limited to a specific curriculum, but is built into all 7 Core Curriculum Content Standards in age appropriate ways. This ensures that Character Education is proactive, pervasive, and constantly evolving. The programs support the ideals of the school's vision statement with its objective to develop respect, compassion, honesty, responsibility and fairness in each student. Because the school is home to a very diverse population of varying races, religions, ethnic groups, and ages, the development of such moral qualities is critical to ensuring respectful treatment of all, regardless of differences (Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standard #4 - CCWRS). The staff must address the educational issues of all children to ensure a cohesive blending of the cultural diversity present in the school environment (CCWRS #4). At the start of each school year, all students attend an assembly in which the principal and assistant principal outline expectations, placing an emphasis on the school's philosophy. The focal point of all Character Education at the school is embodied in that philosophy, "It's all for one and one for all! This is our philosophy. We believe it and we live it!"

The school is a melting pot of various cultures, including students who emigrate from their homelands and arrive at the school with little knowledge of the new culture. The new student is assigned a "Goodwill Ambassador", chosen at the beginning of the school year by the classroom teacher. "Ambassadors" are trained by school counselors to introduce new students, provide a tour of the school, explain rules and routines, and help new students feel a part of the school family. Goodwill Ambassadors are also trained to inform a counselor or teacher if new students are experiencing adjustment problems. Non-English speaking students are provided with a classmate translator, when possible (CCWRS #4). This facet of Character Education encourages compassion and respect and promotes a sense of belonging for all.

Every student at the school is availed opportunities to participate in counseling, health, safety, tutoring and mentoring programs, as well as altruistic projects. Counseling services are available in a continuum of both individual and school-wide programs. Students may participate in on-going groups dealing with a variety of topics. Homework Habits teaches work habits, dependability, promptness, and organization skills (CCWRS #1). Banana Splits helps children deal with the emotions of divorce and separation, while grief groups help children process the emotions of death. Friendship groups help improve socialization skills (CCWRS #1, 3, and 4). Various programs work to build positive relationships by focusing on conflict resolution, diversity, and inclusion (CCWRS #4). Peer Mediation provides students in grades 4-6 with a peaceful alternative for resolving conflicts. Students in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade learn to handle conflict with the DeBug Program and its motto, "Don't bug me, hug me!" In 1<sup>st</sup> grade, diversity and inclusion are taught through the Green Circle Program with the "circle of caring, sharing, and love". The Big Buddy Program teams students in grades 1-3 with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. Young students are matched with older students trained to tutor academically or socially. A unique program is LIFE, which matches community senior volunteers with students from all grades in need of assistance exposing students to a diverse, enriched population. Individual situations often prompt a search for new methods to promote positive peer interactions. Recently a student was excluded from play when a classmate told him, "You can't play, because you're in a wheelchair." A staff member contacted the Buddy Ball organization, resulting in the provision of a mini-clinic for teachers. Procedures were provided to enable the staff to teach students how to play with wheelchair bound students at recess.

Students have learned that they can truly make a difference through school-wide altruistic projects known as Project HOPE (Helping Others Through Public Education). To name but a few, a

coin drive raised thousands of dollars for the Bound Brook schools affected by flooding. Students raised money for Lymphoma Research and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. In addition, students raise money to provide blankets for the homeless and books for the Literacy Volunteers of America. An annual walk-a-thon raised \$2000 for the school's needy families through the Giving Tree program. All of these efforts continuously provide students with opportunities to practice compassion, honesty, respect, responsibility and fairness, ultimately sustaining the programs that promote Character Education (CCWRS #4).

A sense of physical and psychological safety is vital to the learning process; therefore, a safe environment is a top priority in the school (CCWRS #5). The school has a "zero tolerance for violence" policy and strive to be a "bully-proof" school with a program that teaches students to help themselves and others remain safe. Students are not expected to be by-standers to harassment, bullying, teasing and name-calling and are taught intervention strategies and the responsibilities for using them. Research shows that the greatest cognitive growth occurs through positive social interaction present in schools where children feel safe and respected. Cumulative Progress Indicators of the Workplace Readiness Standards #1,3, 4 and 5 are used to assess the development of skills that promote positive social interaction. "Bully-proofing" teaches essential skills to create and maintain a safe environment, as evidenced by students' verbal and written affirmations of feelings of safety. The school's approach to Character Education is holistic. Compassion, honesty, respect, responsibility and fairness are taught in all aspects of school life to ensure a safe and positive atmosphere conducive to learning. As a result, the school provides an education for all students, complete with a sense of warmth, caring and belonging.

**2. Describe the professional development activities and research of the school's faculty. Detail to what extent these activities contribute to exemplary teaching practices in their classrooms. Explain the link between these activities and the specialization or whole-school reform model.**

All staff members continually strive to gain pertinent information regarding teaching and learning. Appropriate time, substitute coverage, and financial resources are made available to staff for attendance at workshops that address the needs of the teacher, his or her students, and/or the school as a whole. Workshops afford the staff opportunities to embrace knowledge, skills, resources, and techniques needed to better serve and prepare students for the future.

Each year, the district hosts 3 full-day in-service programs for faculty. The principal often utilizes these days to plan and implement workshop topics that meet the specific needs of the school. Teachers are required to attend the annual NJEA convention in Atlantic City, and administrators attend conferences and conventions throughout the year. In addition to outside agencies and speakers, the school's counselors, administrators, and teaching staff also conduct training. The principal provides training in youth protection (DYFS), drug and weapon free schools, and affirmative action. Many professional sessions, i.e., faculty meetings, concentrate on numerous services and programs offered by the school's guidance counselors. These programs and services are vital to creating an environment conducive to learning. To that end, guidance services focus on providing the staff the means to meet the needs of students that reach above and beyond academic realms. The counselors and assistant principal, for example, trained the staff on the Bully-proofing Program. All staff are in-serviced annually on current research and bully-proofing strategies. The program has been successful in reducing discipline issues. Students often express satisfaction in attending a school that is warm and safe for all. The counselors constantly provide staff with additional training, research, and resources on various programs and services, including peer mediation, bereavement groups, Character Education, etc. Staff are updated on current trends, strategies, and research, allowing them to better serve the entire school community.

Teachers attend "in-house" and out-of-district technology training sessions. The school's site-based budget allocates \$6000 for school-wide or individual training in any area of focus, as the school deems necessary. One-hour monthly staff development meetings have focused on such topics as: bully-proofing, blood-borne pathogens and emergency medical procedures, changes in Special Education laws, digital portfolios, etc. Additionally, several staff members are working on Master's and Doctorate

degrees with opportunities for tuition reimbursement. All members are encouraged to share educational experiences and research with the entire staff at faculty gatherings.

Professional development contributes to exemplary teaching in the classrooms, as is evident throughout the building where students are constantly engaged in activities that reflect solid decision-making, cooperative learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-reflection skills. The primary goal of the school is to continually improve curriculum, teaching and learning strategies, and the overall atmosphere for the students. It ultimately ensures and reinforces the infusion of Character Education in all activities and daily routines of the school. As a direct result, the school affords its students the best education possible, preparing them for both the work force and the world in an environment that reflects caring, self-improvement, as well as academic, social, emotional, and personal growth for all!

**3. Describe the leadership style of the school's administration and how the management and educational program demonstrate administrative and fiscal efficiency. Describe any innovative scheduling and/or management strategies implemented.**

Leadership is evident at every level and inclusive of various members of the school community, beginning with administration and ending with students. The principal established shared leadership to promote a sense of collective ownership, which, in turn, has encouraged collaborative decision-making and the fulfilling of responsibilities at the highest level. The school's mission statement and philosophy weave the school community together, allowing each leadership role its own unique purpose and level of importance. According to a five-year study recently concluded by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, this type of leadership is the very factor that ensures a high quality education for all students.

In the school, decision-making is often a collaborative effort. The School-Based Management Team comprised of administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and a secretary, meets monthly to discuss concerns, practices, or school-level goals and objectives. The team brainstorms solutions to issues brought forth, and at times, solicits feedback from all staff to promote school-wide participation and ownership. The team reconvenes to share input in order to reach a decision based on consensus to be shared at the next faculty meeting. Unit Leaders represent another school decision-making body. Each grade level is spearheaded by a Unit Leader appointed by the principal from applications submitted annually by interested teachers. Unit Leaders meet at least bi-monthly with administration to discuss grade-level, educational, or social school issues. The meetings allow administration and staff to reflect collaboratively on practices and procedures, climate, and other school concerns. Information is then disseminated to respective unit members. In addition, staff are sometimes afforded decision-making opportunities during faculty meetings. Likewise, parental input is significant to the success of the school. The PTA meets monthly with administrators to review yearly plans, progress on school initiatives, budget expenditures, and fund-raising efforts. The School Level Planning Team, comprised of teachers and parents, meets throughout the school year to discuss, develop, and monitor the 2 school-level goals and objectives established from solicited input from all school community members.

Students are also afforded opportunities for decision-making from the classroom to the school environment. Students provide input into classroom rules by which all members must abide for the school year. Various organized student groups promote leadership qualities and responsibilities, such as student council, Goodwill Ambassadors, or peer mediators (see question 1). The student body also enjoys participating in fun decision-making, such as the naming of the school mascot.

Although decisions regarding educational programs are made at a district level, implementation and areas of concentration are individual to each school. The keys to the success of all programs are communication, collaboration, coordination, and dedication among administrators, staff, and families. The staff works together to assess students' needs and develop plans to meet them. The concept may be developed at Unit Leader, school-based management, or faculty meetings. It may be a singular idea or a group effort, but concepts that become part of the way of school life are concepts that help us continue to provide an exemplary education in an atmosphere filled with understanding, warmth, and caring. Shared leadership ensures a cohesive school community with one singular focal point – the students.

**4. Describe the school's overall approach to assessment. How are your methods aligned to the specialization or whole-school reform model? How are you ensuring that the content you are measuring is consistent with the *Core Curriculum Content Standards*? Provide student performance data for the school years 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 using state tests and, if you wish, national and/or district standardized norm-referenced tests, criterion referenced tests, and/or alternative assessments. Explain any dramatic increase or decrease. Specify which groups, if any, are excluded from the assessments for which you provide data. Give the percentage of students excluded. You may use a chart.**

Assessment is key when determining program success and the overall effectiveness of the strategies and techniques that are being utilized in the school. Students are assessed utilizing both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced evaluative measurements. Criterion-referenced assessments, such as journals, portfolios, textbook or teacher-made tests, rubrics, open-ended questions, writing activities, models, presentations, projects, etc., are a variety of ways students' achievements and successes are measured consistently. In past years, norm-referenced assessment was measured through the administration of the California Achievement Test (CAT) to all students in grades 1-6 and the Test of Cognitive Skills in grades 2, 4, and 6. In the 2000-2001 academic year, the school will administer the Terra Nova Test. This assessment will help to better prepare the students with the necessary skills for successful achievement on the state's ESPA and GEPA tests.

The school's 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 CAT/5 Test and ESPA scores are noted in the charts below. Scores are reported as NCE's for the CAT/5 Test. The ESPA scores are reported as the percentage of students attaining "Proficient" and "Advanced Proficient". The school's aggregate scores for both tests do not include Special Education or ESL student results. While the large majority of Special Education and ESL students take the CAT/5 and ESPA, their scores are not reported as part of the number tested on these tables. The school takes pride in the fact that scores have remained above the norm and the ESPA scores are above the state's average.

**Test: California Achievement Test, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition**

**Scores reported as NCE's**

Year	Grade	Number Tested	Percent Excluded	Language	Math	Reading
1998-1999	First	120	7.69	64.55	72.30	57.73
1999-2000	First	114	12.98	69.05	76.30	59.03
1998-1999	Second	112	13.82	70.22	72.79	56.18
1999-2000	Second	118	11.94	66.81	69.26	58.01
1998-1999	Third	102	14.29	62.24	67.74	62.62
1999-2000	Third	111	9.26	66.35	77.59	63.58
1998-1999	Fifth	111	12.78	65.92	72.58	59.29
1999-2000	Fifth	114	13.64	69.15	72.75	55.23
1998-1999	Sixth	123	11.51	65.49	67.93	55.32
1999-2000	Sixth	126	15.44	64.13	69.51	54.71

**Test: Elementary School Proficiency Assessment, NJ Department of Education**

Year	Grade	Number Tested	Percent Excluded	Language Arts/ Literacy	Math	Science
1998-1999	Fourth	116	8.78	69.8	71.8	91.4
1999-2000	Fourth	105	8.18	65.7	70.5	92.4

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to measure the area of specialization with a traditional form of assessment due to its very nature. Continual assessment of Character Education is supported through teacher observations, analysis of declining discipline referrals, appropriate use of peer mediation sessions, and the knowledge gained from teacher/student conferences. The evaluative measures ensure that the school's Character Education Program is aligned with the NJCCCS and Workplace Readiness Standards. Perhaps the best assessment of the success of the area of specialization can be observed in the warmth and cohesiveness within the school environment.

**5. Describe collaborative efforts with families, business, the community, school districts, and/or higher education that contribute to a school environment governed by the students' needs and promoting high student achievement.**

Students' families are essential partners in educating the children. Families are often included in decision-making regarding their children and the various issues affecting their school lives. They play a vital role in meeting the individual needs of each child. The staff recognizes the need to empower the children's parents/family members to be more involved, ultimately allowing them to be more effective in sharing the responsibilities of their children's education. Parents are afforded the opportunity to voice their opinion through a survey administered to families at the end of each school year as they rate priorities for their children concerning school issues. Families of Special Education students are involved in their children's educational plans via conferences, Pupil Assistance Committee meetings, and Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meetings. Family members are always welcomed and encouraged to participate in school activities, including PTA, room parents, class and school projects, Lunch Buddies, field trip experiences, and working in the school's community resource room or setting up classroom or hallway displays. Families are invited to attend all co-curricular events, both during and after school hours. The PTA is very active. It organizes many events that promote family involvement, including book fairs, parenting seminars, and assemblies. Voice mail, e-mail, conferences, and websites are but a few of the many ways the staff continuously avails itself to parents and families.

The school staff, students, and families are fortunate to have a vast array of community educational resources available to extend learning. Throughout the academic year, various organizations provide resources that build upon the school's curriculum. The local police department assigns an officer to the school to implement a program known as COPS 5 (Coalition of Police and Schools). The local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) sponsors an essay and coloring contest. The local municipality sponsors an essay contest to promote the ideals of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Each year, the local fire department sponsors a fire prevention poster contest, and volunteer firefighters come to the school to discuss fire prevention and safety. Business partnerships have included the Claridge Casino, Bell Atlantic (Verizon), Pizza Hut, Domino's Pizza, and McDonalds, to name but a few.

Higher educational institutions are also resources for the extension of learning. The regional high school provides students as tutors. They also come into the school to read to children on Read Across America Day. In addition, The Richard Stockton State College of New Jersey and Rowan University place student teachers in the school. Stockton College also takes part in the school's annual science fair and also affords the staff, students, and families the opportunity to utilize their library and technology center, as needed.

A school cannot function as an entity in itself. Ultimately, all collaborative efforts, whether with families, businesses or the community, promote high student achievement. The additional resources not only support the educational function of a school, but they can also provide appealing incentives to promote student learning and achievement, such as Pizza Hut certificates for the Book-It Reading Program. Collaboration enhances a larger scope of belonging when the entire community participates as stakeholders in the education of its children.